

DRAFT Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission—THIS DRAFT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVIEWED OR APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

May 2, 2024 – Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar (824 9698 0354) - 6:00 P.M.

Present (online): Bruce Irving, *Chair*; Chandra Harrington, Yuting Zhang, *Members*; Gavin Kleespies, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*

Absent: Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Joseph Ferrara, Liz Lyster, Jo Solet, *Members*; Paula Paris, *Alternate*

Staff present (online): Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*

Public present (online): See attached list.

This meeting was held online with remote participation pursuant to Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

With a quorum present, Chair Irving called the meeting to order at 6:11 P.M. He explained the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures and introduced commissioners and staff.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 5029: 11 Garden St., by First Church in Cambridge. Report on condition of the cockerel weathervane and request to fabricate and install a replica on the church tower.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed photographs of the church. He explained that the Commission had a hearing last fall and approved a temporary certificate to allow the church to remove the cockerel weathervane in order to assess its condition. The church had since applied to replicate the weathervane and install a replica. The weathervane was an architectural feature subject to the Commission's jurisdiction in the Old Cambridge Historic District. [Mr. Kleespies arrived].

Laurie Burt, a member of the church's team for the project, outlined their presentation and introduced Meredith Quinn.

Ms. Quinn, also a church member, moderated the congregation's discernment process conducted to decide the best course of action. They had decided to install a faithful replica of the weathervane and sell the original. Experts had examined the original, made a three-dimensional digital scan of it, and issued reports on its condition, history, and potential for replication.

Peter Byerly, an architect and church member, said the weathervane had been removed from the tower on November 15, 2023 and had been stored in a secure climate controlled facility. He described the large size and weight of the object, much larger than other surviving examples by Shem Drowne. He discussed various approaches to replication such as whether to mimic all the dings and dents.

Ms. Burt described other early weathervanes that had been put in museums and replicas made for installation. These examples included weathervanes in Newburyport, Newburg, and Mt. Vernon. A 1914 replica of the cockerel weathervane had been installed at the Second Church Boston (now Ruggles Baptist Church). The existing cockerel weighed a substantial 172 pounds. She referenced the reports of three conservators. She noted that the lifespan of gilding was about twenty years, but recent environmental requirements had changed the gilding process. A faithful replica would be the same size, profile, shape, and gilded appearance. More information about the replica would be provided after a fabricator was selected.

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Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the Commission.

Ms. Harrington asked how many times the cockerel had been regilded. Lindsay Miller, church archivist, answered that it had been done at least ten times. Ms. Harrington asked if replication had been considered in 1998. Ms. Burt answered that the steeple was scaffolded for repairs in 1998 and the church decided it would be a good opportunity to regild the weathervane. But the deteriorating condition had been noticed recently and that had prompted the study about possible replication.

Mr. Kleespies asked what parameters would be placed on a sale to a museum. Would it have to be permanently on view? Ms. Burt said they would focus on the replication first, but the church's preference is that the original would be on view to the public in either the Boston area or in Massachusetts.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the public.

Marie Saccoccio of 55 Otis Street asked if the church had looked for grants to conserve or restore the original weathervane to a condition in which it could be reinstalled. Ms. Burt said they had not looked for such funding because the church had decided that the best stewardship option was to not reinstall it.

Mr. Irving opened the public comment period.

Ms. Saccoccio said that a North End organization had recently published a photo of the weathervane. She said that if it could not stay in Cambridge, she would like to see it return to the North End.

There being no other speakers, Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Ms. Harrington asked if the original could be displayed in the church. Ms. Burt said it had been considered but the church didn't have the proper security for it.

Mr. Kleespies said a grasshopper weathervane by Shem Drowne was still in place on Faneuil Hall. He suggested that CPA funds or other grant funding would probably be available for restoration of the cockerel. He asked if the congregational discernment process had been completed before the possibility of funding for restoration had been fully explored. Ms. Harrington asked how much of the decision was based on financial requirements. Ms. Burt answered that finances were only one of the considerations. Other factors were that its mission as a church was a higher priority than retaining an artifact.

Mr. Byerly said that the congregation did express a strong desire for the weathervane to stay local and be accessible to the public for viewing.

Mr. Irving asked how many people had participated in the discernment process. Ms. Quinn answered that about 200 people participated.

Mr. Sullivan said he respected the process conducted by the church to reach a collective decision after consulting experts and exploring options. He recommended that the Commission approve a replica in principle and require the church to return with details for final approval.

Reverend Dan Sith noted that the congregation had not been unanimous at the beginning of the process and there was significant grief amongst the congregation about parting with the original cockerel.

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They had some ritual around that grief and followed the discernment process to arrive at their decision. The weathervane would be more secure inside and not up in the air.

Ms. Burks noted that a sale would not necessarily have to happen in the form of an auction. It could be handled with more control by the seller.

Ms. Harrington moved to approve a certificate of hardship, in principle, for the replication of the weathervane on the condition that the applicant return with details of the replica for final approval and noting the Commission's strong recommendation and preference that the original weathervane remain in Massachusetts and be available for public viewing. Ms. Zhang seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Zhang, Kleespies, Sheffield, Irving).

Case 5098: 4 Berkeley St., by Sowing Seeds LLC – Steve Shabet, Trustee. Replace select windows, restore missing trim, repair porch.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed photographs of the property, which had recently been sold by Lesley University. He pointed out the five chimneys and said that he had met with the mason on the construction details for repairs and repointing. He noted that the woodshed/stable at the back of the house was a rare survivor and a historically significant feature that should be protected and preserved.

Peter Daus-Haberle, the project architect, shared his screen and described the work to be done, which included replacing missing moldings and replacement of ten non-original windows with new double-hung windows. Most of the 51 existing windows were original and all of the originals would be restored, not replaced. He described repairs at the mudroom door and back porch. The downspouts would be painted. The electrical service had been upgraded; the new box could not go back in the same place so he showed the proposed new location closer to the corner of the house.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the commission.

Mr. Sheffield asked for confirmation that the original windows would be restored, not replaced. Mr. Daus-Haberle confirmed it. Mr. Sheffield asked about the replacement product. What was the exterior material? Mr. Daus-Haberle said the new units were vinyl-clad on the exterior but could be painted and that was the intention.

Mr. Irving asked for questions or comments from members of the public. There being none, he closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan specified that the windows should have half screens. He recommended that the new electrical service be screened by shrubbery.

Mr. Kleespies said the requested changes were reasonable. He described the associations of the house with Richard Henry Dana Jr. He moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the work as described, with conditions that shrubbery be planted to screen the electrical service and that construction details be approved by staff. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Zhang, Kleespies, Sheffield, Irving). [Mr. Sheffield left the meeting].

Mr. Irving called for a brief recess. He reconvened the meeting at 8:01 P.M.

Case 5099: 12-30 Palmer St., by Harvard Cooperative Society, owner, o/b/o Harvard University, tenant. Add new window openings and a new main entrance with metal lantern/trellis. Modify grade levels and pavement for access to retail spaces. Install new benches and planters.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed photographs of the building, designed for the Harvard Coop in 1964. The original architect, Samuel Glazer, also designed the Kennedy Federal Building, Logan Control Tower, and many schools, synagogues, etc. He showed a view of Palmer Street prior to the construction of the Annex. He noted design elements and materials such as crenelations, vertical alignment, clinker brick and poured-in-place concrete. He pointed out Jody Pinto's public art, which had never been fully constructed.

Alexandra Offiong of Harvard's Planning & Design office introduced the project as a partnership between the Coop and the university. The intended tenants included active ground floor users, university offices on the second floor, and Coop offices on the upper floors. She described their outreach to city departments and Harvard Square stakeholders over many months. She introduced Stephen Baker and Marcelo Arjona of Baker Design Group.

Mr. Arjona shared his screen and showed photos of the building, which had been vacant for quite a while. He noted the colonnade, loading bay, and office entry.

Mr. Baker presented the details of the proposed alterations, including new second floor bay windows with fins for a prismatic effect of light into the offices, a transformer room access door, a metal lantern with color LED lighting at the office entry, a blade sign for street identification, a green roof, and performance spaces. The goal was to activate the street.

Eric Kramer, landscape architect at Reed Hilderbrand, said the proposed changes to the colonnade would achieve more accessibility and provide seating opportunities.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the commission.

Ms. Zhang remarked that the beauty of the building was its concrete skeleton behind the brick. She asked if the architects had studied fenestration options that were more consistent with the existing architecture than the prismatic bays. She asked why they proposed removing the notch in the brick skin at the ground floor. Mr. Baker replied that they had done a hundred façade studies. While the new second floor windows project through the brick, they don't introduce new materials. He said they had also studied many ideas for the lantern. The notch had been eliminated in order to make the commercial bay more accessible, visible and welcoming.

Ms. Harrington asked if the projecting bays would be lit at night. Mr. Baker answered that it would be a building management decision whether to leave the lights on. Ms. Harrington remarked that having more illumination on the street would make it safer. Mr. Baker described the existing and proposed lighting. Ms. Harrington asked if the design could include more greenery. Mr. Kramer said the site

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didn't allow for much planted ground area, but they would recommend seasonal planter boxes.

Ms. Burks asked if the mural on the panels facing the transformer room would be damaged when the utility needs to access the transformer. Mr. Baker answered that the graphics would likely be applied as a film rather than painted onto the panels. If damaged, it could be replaced. The transformer did not need to be accessed on a regular basis—only in emergencies.

There were no questions or comments from the public.. Mr. Irving acknowledged correspondence received regarding the case before closing the public comment period.

Mr. Kleespies commended the use of a green roof. He suggested a musical theme for the mural opposite Club Passim. He had reservations about the size of the lantern but felt the overall design would be an improvement to Palmer Street.

Ms. Zhang agreed about the size of the lantern. She suggested that development of its details could improve it. She spoke in favor of retaining the notch in the brick wall at the ground floor.

Mr. Irving said the energy of the design was exciting. The street was a grim canyon. A mock-up might be beneficial, but he approved of the boldness of the design.

Mr. Sullivan said he agreed with Ms. Zhang's suggestion to keep the notch in the brick wall.

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with approval of details delegated to staff and with the recommendation that the applicant give consideration to retaining the notch. Ms. Zhang seconded the motion, which passed 4-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Zhang, Kleespies, Irving)

Case 5100: 9-11A and 11B Mt. Auburn St., by The Packard Humanities Institute, owner, o/b/o Mt Auburn MLD LLC. Construct third-floor addition at #9-11A. Construct new dormers at #11B. Remove the connecting structure and mechanical lift. Renovate the exterior of both buildings.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed photographs of the property. For clarity he would refer to the building at 9-11A as #9 and 11B as #11. He described the two buildings, both originally designed as houses but converted to office use in the late twentieth century. He noted that visibility of the ell roofs was limited but there were some views from Mt Auburn Street and Banks Street.

Attorney Sarah Rhatigan introduced her client, Mike Driscoll, and the project architect, Adam Glassman. They proposed to return the buildings to residential use. The project would require a variance because there was no open space and a special permit for the accessory apartment at #11.

Mr. Glassman shared his screen and described the proposed changes, which included dormers on the ell of #11 and a cross-gable/dormer addition at #9. He also proposed the removal of the lift and connector between buildings, replacement of the chimneys with replicas, replacement windows, siding and trim repairs, and removal of a skylight. Areaways and steps to new basement egress doors would not be visible from a public way.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from members of the commission or staff.

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Mr. Kleespies asked about the existing brick courtyard. Mr. Glassman said it would remain. There was an existing curb cut and the courtyard was used as parking.

Ms. Burks asked if the roof over the entrance stoop at #9 would remain. Mr. Glassman replied in the affirmative.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

Mr. Sullivan recommended approval of the certificate of appropriateness with a recommendation to the BZA that connected dormers to the main roof at #9 be allowed for practical reasons even though they would not conform to the dormer guidelines.

Ms. Harrington moved to grant the certificate of appropriateness for the design as presented, and to authorize the staff to convey the recommendation to the BZA about relaxing the dormer guidelines. She further moved to delegate review and approval of construction details to staff.

Mr. Kleespies seconded the motion, which passed 4-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Zhang, Kleespies, Irving)

Minutes

Mr. Irving moved to approve the draft minutes of the April 4, 2024 meeting as submitted. Mr. Kleespies seconded, and the motion passed 4-0 in a roll call vote. (Harrington, Zhang, Kleespies, Irving).

Ms. Harrington moved to adjourn. Mr. Kleespies seconded, and the motion passed 4-0. (Harrington, Zhang, Kleespies, Irving) The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Present on the Zoom Webinar online, May 2, 2024**

Peter Byerly	25 Medway St., Dorchester, MA
Meredith Quinn	11 Garden St
Laurie Burt, Esq.	33 Bradbury St.
Lindsay Miller	11 Garden St
Rev. Dan Smith	11 Garden St.
Sarah Rhatigan	Trilogy Law, 12 Marshall St, Boston, MA 02108
Michael Driscoll	9-11 Mt Auburn St
Adam Glassman	GCD Architects, 2 Worthington St
Alexandra Offiong	1350 Massachusetts Ave
Peter Daus-Haberle	63 North Hancock St, Lexington, MA 02420
Michael Lamphier	Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) Real Estate
Eric Kramer	Reed Hilderbrand L. A., 130 Bishop Allen Dr
Emma Xue	Reed Hilderbrand L. A., 130 Bishop Allen Dr
Stephen Baker	Baker Design Group, Wellesley
Thomas J. Lucey	Harvard University
Marcelo Arjona	Baker Design Group, Wellesley
John DiGiovanni	50 Church St, 5th Fl
Thomas Gordon	8 Park Ln, Norwalk, CT 06854
David G	31 Pleasant St Cos Cob, CT 06807
Bishop Nawrot	16 Seminole Way, Bloomfield, CT 06002
Donald Johnson	46 Kings Way, Unit 802B, (Waltham, MA?)
Christine Reynolds	52 Piedmont Ave, Waltham, MA
Kate Judd	89 Museum St
Laura Buch	Harvard University
Marie Saccoccio	55 Otis St
Jennifer Jones	24A Bradbury St
John Hawkinson	

Note: City is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.

Note: See <https://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/permitsApplications/projectplansandstaffreports> for a link to the Zoom meeting recording.